

## PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE

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### MANY ARTICLES LOST IN A YEAR

Thirty Thousand Umbrellas Left on Trains—Clean Bill of Health Given to California Birds—Letter Carriers Discuss Resolution of National Convention

The opening this fall of the eleventh season of the People's Institute promises to rouse Father Knickerbocker more strongly than ever before to many of his crying needs, which, while the city in the past has been disposing in a spendthrift manner of more than half a billion dollars annually, have remained unattended to. With the approval which Governor Hughes has given the work of the Institute it is rapidly assuming the place of one of the most effective as well as one of the most unique organizations of its kind in the world. Cradled in the great center of political and social unrest, that is New York's turbulent East Side, its activities have extended into many fields resulting through its organized endeavor in giving the people a voice in the settlement of the civic problems which directly concern them. The organization covers in its work practically the whole social field, busying itself with questions of street cleaning, milk purification and other every day problems.

New Yorkers lose every year 30,000 umbrellas on subways, surface lines and elevated trains, or more than enough to supply the whole state of Nevada at a ratio more generous than that which usually exists. New Yorkers indeed seem to have acquired the losing habit almost to the point of a mania, and while figures for the whole city cannot be obtained the statistics of the lost and found departments maintained by the street car lines show that more than 100,000 articles are lost on them every year. If to this total be added those found by dishonest persons who do not turn them in, the figure approaches the quarter million mark, and for the whole city in all its different activities the total number of articles lost every year is estimated at five million, valued at \$2,500,000. This of course does not include fortunes lost in Wall Street. Every article of male and female attire appears in the list, and glass eyes, false teeth and wigs are common. More umbrellas are left behind than anything else, but hundreds of overcoats, shoes, shirts, coats, vests and even trousers are turned in every week. It would hardly seem that a person traveling in a street car would forget a cannon, yet two of these implements of war have been found in the last six months. Parrots and canaries, to say nothing of four footed pets, all go to fill the menagerie department of the lost and found offices. Perhaps the most curious find reported lately was what is officially described as "a tin can and its contents," said contents being very flat beer. Of course it is absolutely worthless, but as the law requires all found articles to be held for a specified time it has duly taken its official place with all the other varied articles which New York loses every year.

A clean bill of health is given to the birds of California by the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture after an exhaustive investigation by F. E. L. Beall. The object was to determine the relative value of the birds as insect destroyers compared with their destructive propensities as far as concerned the State famous. To this end analyses of the contents of the "tummys" of many birds were made and the conclusion reached that the birds preferred an insect diet or fed on the seed of pestiferous weeds, rather than on the luscious fruit. Sometimes the food supply fails when the birds are compelled to eat fruit, which was probably the case when the robins descended on the olive orchards in Santa Clara Valley in 1900-1901. It appears also that water is not easily found and no doubt many birds attack fruit to relieve the dryness of their throats. The conclusions are that depredations by birds may arise from the settlement of a region and the consequent introduction of new crops, accompanied by a diminished supply of natural food, destruction of enemies and a general change of natural conditions; from failure of the normal food supply causing migration in search of food, or an attack upon some particular crop in which case the bird naturally eats that which is most available. Mr. Beall testifies to "a healthy state of feeling on the part



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of the great majority of California fruit growers toward the bird population." While many of them stated that they still suffered less none advocated measures for the extermination or even the material decrease of the birds. It is pleasant to note that harm. Mr. Beall finds that the sentiment appears to be "We can't get along without the birds." Among the birds investigated were the House Finch, Linnet, Western Wren, Swallows, including the Cliff, Western Barn and Violet Green; California Shrike; Western Warbling Vireo, Cassin Vireo; Warblers of various kinds, Western Mocking Bird, California Thrasher, Wrens, Nuthatches and Pittsies; Kinglets, Gnatcatchers and robins.

There is considerable discussion in the ranks of the letter carriers over the resolution adopted at the recent annual convention to pay J. D. Holland ten thousand dollars in recognition of his services in securing the passage of the increased salary bill. Mr. Holland was fortunate enough to be President of the National Association of Letter Carriers when the bill went through. The work done by previous presidents and others seems to have been lost sight of in the movement to properly reward Mr. Holland. The Letter Carriers Association had been fighting for years to obtain an increase in salary for the force and a number of campaigns had been waged. Last year the Postoffice Department and especially First Assistant Postmaster General Hitchcock, urged the increase and it was granted by Congress. At the convention in Canton, Ohio, Mr. Holland retired and a resolution to give him ten thousands dollars was passed. This has not met with the approval of many of Branch 36, New York City, which has been active in sending throughout

the country resolutions adopted demanding a referendum vote on the ten thousand dollar gift. It is claimed that a large number of other branches have endorsed the action of the New York Branch and that a referendum vote will be had. Just what Mr. Holland did to earn the ten thousand dollars proposed to be given him, does not appear. It is claimed that when called down by the department for lobbying in behalf of the increase, Mr. Holland promised to use his influence against lobbying and that he would not be a candidate for reelection as president of the letter carriers. The New Yorkers say: "It would seem that the claims for credit in shaping or procuring salary legislation are based on presumptive evidence of ignorance on the part of our members as to the elemental forces which shape legislation and when audited are found to be so excessive as to be nothing short of an insult to intelligence. Any reward for services rendered should be in proportion to their value which, in this case it is evident is much less than \$10,000."



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